Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2011

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson:

We urge you to support a funding level of **$154.255 million for the National Endowment for the Arts in the Fiscal Year 2013 Interior Appropriations bill** to support the NEA's core mission to bring the arts to every American. The NEA reached its peak funding at $176 million in 1992, and has never fully recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in FY 1996.

Thanks to your leadership, the NEA received $170 million in funding in the FY11 subcommittee markup, though the final NEA funding level in FY11 was set at $155 million before the across-the-board cut and was further reduced in FY12 to $146 million. Fulfilling the President's funding request at $154.255 million is a responsible way to utilize one our most effective and virtuous investment tools. For every one dollar we spend on federal arts initiatives we see eight non-federal dollars leveraged while at the same time enriching our children and communities with access to the arts they might not otherwise have.

This level of funding for FY13 will help the NEA maintain its extremely successful programs, including *The Big Read, Our Town, Challenge America, The Mayor's Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Initiative, Blue Star Museums, Shakespeare in American Communities* and *Operation Homecoming*, which help the NEA reach every congressional district in the country. In FY 2011, the NEA awarded over $118 million in appropriated funds through **just over 2,100 grants reaching all 435 congressional districts.** Few other federal investments have such a widespread impact and magnifying effect across the entire nation.

<u>The NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of communities nationwide</u>. Each year, the nonprofit arts industry generates $166.2 billion in economic activity, and provides 5.7 million full-time jobs. At the same time, this industry returns $12.6 billion to the federal government in income taxes. The National Governor's Association and the U.S. Conference of Mayors recognize the enormous value of the arts in our communities and regional economies. Arts and culture-related industries provide direct economic benefits to states and communities: they create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These businesses employ 2.99 million people, representing 4.14 percent of all businesses and 2.17 percent of all employees, respectively. America's arts and entertainment are also leading exports, with estimates of more than $30 billion annually in overseas sales. From the work of nonprofit arts agencies to the impact of cultural tourism, the creative sector is important to state economies all across the country.

<u>The NEA supports life-long learning in the arts.</u> The NEA's education programs have helped to sustain support in local communities for arts education, which has been proven to help close the education achievement gap and also benefit children and adults in many important ways throughout their lives. Students with an education rich in the arts have better grade point averages in core academic subjects, score better on standardized tests, and have lower drop-out rates than students without arts education.

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We strongly urge you to support NEA funding at $154.255 million in the FY 2013 Interior Appropriations bill. By approving this level of funding, you will maintain the NEA's ability to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from the arts. We appreciate your attention to this request, and hope we can count on your continued support.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Todd R. Platts
Member of Congress

James Moran
Member of Congress

Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress

Timothy H. Bishop
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Madeleine Z. Bordallo
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Bob Filner
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Charles Gonzalez
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Al Green
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Raúl Grijalva
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Alcee L. Hastings
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Mazie Hirono
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Rush Holt
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Steve Israel
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John Lewis
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Dale Kildee
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Dennis Kucinich
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James Langevin
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Barbara Lee
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Jared Polis
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David Price
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Mike Quigley
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Nick Rahall
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